HUMAN SERVICES GRANTS PROGRAM (HSGP)

FY 2022-23 PROGRAM STATUS REPORT

Agency: **Disability Community Resource Center**

Program: **Independent Living Services and Home Access Program (HAP)**



**Instructions:**

* This document should be used by HSGP grantees to report on mid-year and year-end outcomes and accomplishments.
* All reports submitted to the City are considered public record. Please note that staff will use the information provided in the mid-year and year-end reports to provide Council and the public with summary reports of agency performance highlighting key outcomes, successes, findings and concerns.
* Some programs or agencies may be subject to additional or different reporting requirements per the program’s Exhibit A, Special Funding Conditions, of your executed Grant Agreement with the City.
* It is important, when preparing this report, to be familiar with the program’s Exhibit B, Program Plan, of your executed Grant Agreement with the City.
* Please insert responses in the spaces provided for Sections I-VII for both the Mid-Year and Year-End Program Status Reports.
* A separate Program Status Report must be prepared for each Program Plan specified in your contract.
* To submit your completed report to the City, upload the file to your agency’s SharePoint folder. A link to your agency’s SharePoint folder as well as instructions on how to use the site will be emailed to your staff separately.

###### SECTION I: PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS, CHALLENGES, AND CHANGES

Provide a brief summary of your program accomplishments, challenges, and changes that occurred during the reporting period. Please also provide information or observations related to population or service trends.

The Disability Community Resource Center (DCRC) serves intersectional (gender, race, class), cross-disability (all disabilities as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)) Santa Monica residents and residents of Los Angeles County across lifespan to achieve the goals of independent living, equal opportunity, full participation and economic self-sufficiency through advocacy and non-residential peer support services and training programs. Our programs are built on evidence-based research, crisis intervention, Trauma Informed Care, peer support and advocacy to help members maintain economic self-sufficiency and stable community living.

## Accomplishments

During the reporting period, DCRC provided intensive case management services to 131 Santa Monica participants and 451 total program participants. Members served during this time continued to experience greater multiple basic needs, such as food insecurity, employment, a need for a care worker, emergency financial assistance, transportation, food assistance, advocacy and mental health services. Members received corresponding intensive case management to support them through this phase of the pandemic. For example, DCRC helped members at risk of homelessness and eviction pursue stable housing through housing voucher programs (Section 8, HOME, Project Based Vouchers), as well as the Below Market Housing (BMH) program; provided emergency financial assistance through the Emergency Assistance Program (EAP) to maintain economic stability; provided assistance to enroll in disability benefits such as SSI, Medi-Cal and Cal-Fresh, and helped locate affordable transportation. We also connected members to mental health services and peer led support groups.

DCRC coordinated case management with the City of Santa Monica Housing and Human Services Division, City Attorney's Office, Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles, and City staff and other partners to prevent people with disabilities from experiencing eviction and homelessness, remain independent and maintain stability in the community. DCRC began participating in the Senior & People with Disabilities Taskforce to keep the most vulnerable residents housed.

The DCRC's Emergency Assistance Program (EAP) provided financial assistance to 12 members. This program provides financial assistance to low-income Santa Monica residents with disabilities and older adults experiencing financial hardship. Eligible members received assistance for rent, move-in expenses, utilities, medication, assistive technology, gas and grocery cards and medical equipment not covered by insurance.

The DCRC's Home Access Program (HAP) provided home modifications to 11 members. The HAP serves low-income Santa Monica residents with disabilities and older adults requiring home modifications including equipment to reduce the risk of falls and provide mobility access. Modifications include but are not limited to stair lifts, grab bars, ramps, fixed and non-fixed bathroom safety equipment and handrails. Additional accomplishments during the reporting period include the following:

* DCRC partnered with our local farmer's market to host our annual Friendsgiving event on November 18th attended by 80 community members as we celebrated the achievements of the year.
* DCRC partnered with several community organizations to celebrate Disability Pride Month on July 20, 2022. Thirty intersectional cross-disability community members across the lifespan attended. Our 2023 Disability Pride event was July 25th and 43 community members attended.
* DCRC continued outreach and education, hosting COVID booster shot clinics in the latest phase of the pandemic in 2022. DCRC continued our partnership with Veritas Healthcare, providing 18 COVID vaccines to community members at clinics on October 21st and November 21st. These numbers reflect the changing landscape of the pandemic.
* In 2023 as national and local COVID response shifted from emergency to recovery, many DCRC members experienced mental health challenges such as anxiety, social isolation, job loss, housing instability, death of a loved one, and other trauma. DCRC partnered with online mental health platform Cerebral to provide 2 free months of therapy with a licensed therapist to DCRC members requesting support. healthcare and COVID outreach. During this reporting period, 53 DCRC members were enrolled in Cerebral services. DCRC was awarded a grant through Together Towards Health, an initiative of the Public Health Institute and the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, to inform and deliver ongoing strategies to increase equity and access to mental health.
* Several hundred members attended DCRC's ongoing bi-weekly fresh fruit and vegetable distribution sponsored by a local farmer's market during FY 2022-23, providing access to health and emergency relief.

DCRC administers a DCRC Community Programs Participant Survey and here are some highlights from the results:

* Improved performance of daily living activities: 80% Agree
* Greater ability to maintain stable housing: 80% Agree
* Increased knowledge of obtaining resources: 90% Agree
* Feeling safer in their home environment as a result of a home modification: 80% Agree
* Having a greater connection to the Santa Monica community: 80% Agree
* Feeling more independent and self-sufficient: 80% Agree
* Overall satisfaction with the services received from DCRC: 90% Satisfied

## Challenges

This reporting period was marked by challenges related to the ongoing pandemic as the population we serve remained at high risk for ongoing COVID variants because of underlying conditions and comorbidities, and experienced disproportionate challenges requiring much more intensive services to support them during the latest phase of the pandemic. DCRC identified new and emerging needs in our community exposed by the pandemic such as food insecurity, mental health, benefits establishment and digital access, and in response developed new programming, expanded existing programs, and built a new database to revolutionize simultaneous services delivery. Additionally, DCRC focused on COVID public health vaccination, booster shot education and direct services, which included outreach to underserved intersectional community members who had trouble navigating or were unable to access vaccination or booster appointments. Unprecedented inflation has also posed additional challenges, with rising costs of living contributing to housing and food instability. DCRC is well positioned to offer services as the focus shifts from pandemic response to recovery - as directed by federal, state and local agencies - as well as to support with the rising cost of living.

During the year, we experienced significant staffing challenges. Community Programs was understaffed for over 9-months making timely services delivery challenging and reducing our outreach activities. Please see below and Section IV for further information.

**Changes**

During the reporting period, DCRC recruited, hired and then lost a Systems Change Advocate, hired an Assistive Technology Coordinator, a Community Programs Independent Living Specialist and a Disability Benefits & Personal Assistant Coordinator. These hires represent efforts to build on existing programs and build new programs through community assessment and evidence-based research to effectively serve intersectional people with disabilities across the lifespan aligning with our strategic plan. DCRC has since hired an additional Community Programs Independent Living Specialist who started with DCRC on July 3, 2023. These new hires allow us to serve more community members and increase our outreach efforts in the community to continue building this vital program for Santa Monica residents with disabilities across the life-span.

###### SECTION II: ASSESSMENT, EVALUATION AND PARTICIPANT INVOLVEMENT

Briefly describe or list any program assessment or evaluation efforts during the reporting period and summarize the results achieved. Specifically highlight any program participant involvement in these efforts.

To revolutionize our reporting and services provision with simultaneous services delivery coordination between programs, the Deputy Director project managed and collaborated with an Exact Change Strategies programmer in 2022 to build a cloud based customized database to succeed our previous database. This development implemented our simultaneous services delivery model, Apricots, a vast improvement over the chronological services delivery previously deployed. DCRC's intake process is now conducted through cloud-based software (vs. paper forms which require duplication of work). Initial interviews are the starting point for documented engagement between DCRC members and DCRC staff. During the initial interview, the member signs rights and responsibilities forms online and then the staff member signs an eligibility statement. When the staff member prepares the file, the checklist and service manual ensure that the requirements are met and the file is uniform. Files are assigned to the most appropriate staff members based on the program(s) the member requests services from. Staff members set up a goal planning meeting with the member. All details are entered into the database to ensure simultaneous service delivery for timely, effective solutions. Program Managers regularly review documentation and goal plans. Staff are provided with ongoing database training and support regarding policies and procedures from the intake process to goal achievement, to ensure requirements are met. Apricots allows staff to pull outcomes reports directly from the database as well. Apricots ensures that data is complete, accurate, and uniform.

Our program participants are involved in evaluating the services they receive by completing our DCRC Community Programs Participant Survey. The survey is a method of gathering members’ feedback about our services and analyze whether the member achieved their independent living goals. Survey categories include performance of daily living activities, ability to maintain stable housing, increasing the ability to develop strategic goals, increasing knowledge of obtaining resources, feeling safe in their home environment as a result of a home modification, a greater connection to the Santa Monica community, feeling more connected to family and friends, feeling more independent and self-sufficient, improved overall quality of life, and overall satisfaction with the services received from DCRC.

Please highlight any new efforts to collaborate with other service providers and/or leverage services. Please include the agency name(s) and service(s) provided.

DCRC recently became a partner of “Unite Us”, an online network to support the needs of the community. The goal of this network is to create healthier communities by partnering with community-based organizations, healthcare providers, and public agencies to send/receive electronic referrals, resolve social needs, track outcomes, and gather data for accountability. They are in partnership with **Kaiser Permanente, Blue Shield California, the City of Long Beach,** and **the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health. Access to the network is free for nonprofits, community health centers, and FQHC partners.**

######  SECTION III: BOARD INVOLVEMENT

 Please indicate:

* Number of Board meetings conducted during the reporting period - 12
* Average Board member attendance - 10
* Board development activities conducted during the reporting period - 1
* Significant policy directions or actions taken by the Board during the reporting period – Extended Executive Director’s 2-year contract and updated Employee Handbook.
* Number of board members who reside and/or work in Santa Monica - 3
* Board vacancies and plans to fill those vacancies, if applicable - 1 Vacancy

###### SECTION IV: STAFFING PATTERN

Have there been any staffing changes during the reporting period (i.e., staff vacancies, staff recruitment, changes in FTE)? Please describe. If staff vacancies exist, please provide an anticipated hiring date and explain how caseloads and work have been distributed to ensure service levels are maintained.

During this reporting period, DCRC hired a Systems Change Advocate, a graduate of Brooklyn Law School, to contribute to legislative advocacy to apply a disability lens to public policy, organize intersectional people with disabilities across the lifespan and develop individual advocacy to train our members to become advocates. Advocacy was focused on advancing the goals of the ADA and Olmstead Decision that intersectional (gender, race, socioeconomical), cross-disability (any disability) community members across the lifespan can live in the community and should be provided with access to healthcare and safety and trauma informed care. Unfortunately, our advocate left early in the year to study for the California Bar Exam and we have yet to find another candidate.

The Assistive Technology (AT) Specialist executes the Digital Bridge Project which works to provide access to computer, cellular and online technology to community members significantly impacted by the pandemic to bridge the Digital Divide. In mid­ September 2022, the AT role became vacant. We recruited and hired a new AT Specialist who began in January.

DCRC hired a Disability Benefits & Personal Assistant Coordinator in early October 2022, to not only recruit direct care workers and unpaid family caregivers, but assist members applying to establish SSI, SSDI and Medi-Cal for those who are unable to work. During this reporting period, DCRC partnered with the California Department of Aging CalGrows Program to provide care workers with ongoing training (e.g., Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Dementia, Cultural Diversity, Food Safety, Infection Control, Provider, and Consumer communication and more).

DCRC hired one Community Programs Independent Living Specialist for the Santa Monica program to contribute to the intensive case management required to assist residents to live effectively and independently in the community and avoid homelessness. There is one vacant Community Programs Independent Living Specialist position for which DCRC is actively recruiting.

**Please indicate how volunteers or paid or unpaid interns were used during the reporting period. Provide the total number of volunteers or interns and hours provided. If interns were used, please indicate their program level (e.g. undergraduate, masters).**

Volunteers are critical to increasing staff capacity and focus on service delivery. DCRC executes an ongoing successful Employment Services Program with an internship component and trained and supervised by Employment Services staff. The Peer Support Training Class utilizes interns to assist the Peer Support Training over the course of the class. The organization as a whole often uses volunteers and interns to shadow independent living specialists to develop Independent Living Plans to establish and achieve member goals. Volunteers assist the Administrative Office Manager with various clerical tasks throughout the office. During the reporting period, ten volunteers contributed 550 hours to the work of DCRC.

In 2021, DCRC became an Affiliated Field Education Community Agency through an agreement with UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs, Department of Social Welfare, to provide first and second year MSW students the opportunity to complete internship hours weekly at DCRC. MSW interns implement trauma informed care through case management, community outreach, advocacy and education. DCRC has a summer intern who is a second year MSW working exclusively with Community Programs to contribute her knowledge to solve multiple acute issues brought by members.

***SECTION V: SPECIAL FUNDING CONDITIONS***

*Provide a status report on how the agency is meeting its funding conditions listed in Exhibit A of your Grant Agreement, clearly addressing each individual funding condition in bullet point format.*

***Standard Funding Conditions:***

1. *Participate in the City’s efforts to track human services program demographics and outcomes. Participation may include, but is not limited to: meeting with City staff, consultants, and; providing information regarding current data systems, technology infrastructure, policies and procedures, needs, opportunities, and concerns; incorporating the City into existing consent for release of information forms; signing and adhering to a City data management agreement; and contributing data toa centralized data management system. Aggregated or de-identified information may be requested for the purposes of analyzing data being collected.*

During the reporting period, DCRC built and implemented a cloud based customized database to succeed our previous database to revolutionize our simultaneous services delivery. The Apricots system was fully implemented in October 2022. DCRC's intake process and case management is now conducted effectively through cloud-based software. Apricots also allows DCRC to run reports efficiently.

1. *Detail steps taken to provide services in response to needs emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic, including the safe reopening of facilities and any modifications to service delivery*

Since the COVID-19 pandemic started in mid-March of 2020, DCRC followed Los Angeles County Public Health Safer Reopening Business Protocols for Services Provider Classification and observance of all LA County Public Health Protocols. DCRC developed and implemented policies to protect employees and members attending appointments at the Center including mandatory COVID vaccinations for employees, remote and hybrid work schedules and virtual meetings and trainings. DCRC continues to follow federal, state and local guidance as the pandemic emergency response transitions to a recovery response.

1. *Agency will assist eligible participants in submitting applications to applicable relief and housing sustainability programs, including local, state, and federal rental assistance programs, including but not limited to: Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) and Below Market Housing (BMH) Waitlists, Preserving Our Diversity (POD), Continuum of Care (CoC), and HOME voucher programs.*

Agency staff continue to support eligible participants in submitting applications for applicable housing and rental assistance programs.

***CDBG Funding****:*

* ***Eligible Activities:*** DCRC complies with eligibility requirements for the uses of CDBG funds as detailed in 24 CFR 570, which benefits a limited clientele who are generally presumed to be principally/ow and moderate-income individuals. DCRC collects incomes verification documentation at the time of service for participants receiving CDBG-funded services. DCRC will work with City staff to comply with fiscal year-end reporting as required by HUD in the preparation of the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report.
* ***Program Income:*** DCRC does not have any program income affecting this grant of the services covered by this grant.
* ***Uniform Administrative Requirements:*** DCRC complies with all applicable uniform administrative requirements as described in 24 CFR 570.502 of the HUD CDBG regulations. This is verified in DCRC's annual audit performed by an independent auditor which is completed by Match 31st each year and reported to our funders.
* ***Financial Management:*** DCRC maintains its accounting records using QuickBooks online, which is an accounting system based on GAAP. DCRC has an annual audit performed by an independent auditor which is completed by March 31st each year and reported to our funders. Depending on the level of funding each year, and as required by our Federal funders under 2 CFR 200, the audit is either a normal audit, or a single audit.

**SECTION VI: SERVICE NEEDS AND REFERRALS**

The following tables track data on program participant needs and the inter-agency relationships utilized to address them. Please provide this information as completely and accurately as possible for participants entering your program.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **ASSESSMENT OF ADDITIONAL SERVICE NEEDS****(Santa Monica Participants)** | **FY 2022-23****Number Responding “Yes”****at Mid-year\*** | **FY 2022-23****Number Responding “Yes”****at Year-end** |
| 1. “Do you or anyone in your household have unmet employment needs?”
 |  n/a |  31 |
| 1. ”Have you missed or been late on a home rental or mortgage payment within the last 12 months?”
 |  n/a |  17 |
| 1. “Do you or anyone in your household have an unmet childcare/afterschool need?”
 |  n/a |  1 |

 \*data not collected until year-end

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **INCOMING PARTICIPANT REFERRALS** **(Santa Monica Participants)** | **FY 2022-23****Number****at Mid-year** | **FY 2022-23****Number****at Year-end** |
| Participants referred by another agency | 44 | 98 |
|  **Please list the top 3 referring agencies** |  |  |
| * 1. **Santa Monica City Staff**
 | 20 | 42 |
| * 1. **WISE & Healthy**
 | 24 | 39 |
| 1. **Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles**
 | 0 | 10 |

**SECTION VII: PROGRAM SERVICES AND OUTCOMES**

*Provide a status report on the program activity levels and outcomes for Santa Monica program participants as indicated in Section VII of your Program Plan. Examples have been provided for your reference; please insert rows as needed to align with your Program Plan. For outcome achievement not documented in a report, please provide narrative explanation and/or documentation of how outcome data is captured.*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Service Category/ Program Goal | Activity Type | Activity Description | Annual Target | Documentation Method | Mid-Year Status Report | Year-End Status Report |
| 1 | ***Increase******knowledge of promoting******independence*** | Output | Participant will receive information and referral services | 90 SMPP | Case File | 51 | 131 |
|  |  | Outcome | Participant will demonstrate achievement in independent living through partner referral and/or education.  | 55 SMPP | Case File | 51 | 131 |
| 2 | ***Increase Independence*** | Output | Participant will develop Independent Living Plan and receive support services consistent with set goals. | 135 SMPP | Case File | 40 | 131 |
|  |  | Outcome | Participant will demonstrate progress towards completing at least one of their independent living goals by achieving a milestone. | 100 SMPP | Case File | 40 | 80 |
| 3 | ***Attain Personal Care Worker Services*** | Output | Participant will receive support to obtain, increase or maintain care worker services. | 45 SMPP | Case File | 12 | 24 |
|  |  | Outcome | Participant will secure, increase or maintain care worker services | 40 SMPP | Case File | 6 | 12 |
| 4 | **Increase and/or maintain income** | Output | Participant will receive services to increase and/or maintain income (i.e., benefits counseling, emergency assistance funds, Cal Fresh, food assistance, employment services). | 35 SMPP | Case File | 15 | 45 |
|  |  | Outcome | Participant will maintain or increase income through services delivered. | 30 SMPP | Case File | 15 | 30 |
| 5 | **Maintain Housing Stability** | Output | Participant will receive housing support services (i.e. housing navigation, home modifications, emergency funds for rent/utilities) | 50 SMPP | Case File | 40 | 90 |
|  |  | Outcome | Participant will maintain and/or increase housing stability | 45 SMPP | Case File | 40 | 90 |

 **VARIANCE REPORT:**

###### *Please provide an explanation for each output or outcome for which achievement is above or below 10% of the projected target.*

1. **Increase knowledge of promoting independence:**

This output and outcome was far above target. DCRC identified new and emerging needs in our community exposed by the pandemic such as food insecurity, mental health, benefits establishment and digital access which drove the increase in information and referral services.

1. **Increase Independence**

This output and outcome was within 10% of the target. Santa Monica members in crisis often develop simultaneous goals involving housing, employment, transportation, Assistive Technology, and developing an effective match with a care worker. Every case has involved extensive management and an increasing number of services delivered to each individual while reducing the number of people served. Additionally, there are significant policy issues failing people with disabilities we see play out daily in our membership. For example: Lack of affordable accessible housing, lack of a meaningful income caused by discrimination and outdated Social Security policies.

All 131 members who developed independent living plan goals made progress towards these goals even if the ultimate milestone goal wasn’t accomplished. DCRC staff supported members with completion of home modifications, providing emergency assistance, employment attainment, and increasing housing stability during the reporting period.

Efforts are being made to engage more members through new programming to increase independence and reach their independent living goals, such as our grant awarded by Together Toward Health, an initiative of the Public Health Institute and the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, to inform and deliver ongoing strategies to increase access to mental healthcare and equity as COVID response shifts to recovery. Through the grant, DCRC is partnering with mental healthcare provider Cerebral to provide access to 2 months free online therapy to eligible DCRC members experiencing anxiety, grief, loss, social isolation, job loss, housing instability, or other trauma. This is an extraordinary opportunity to provide equal access to mental healthcare. This is an extraordinary opportunity to provide equal access to mental healthcare and promote increased independence among our members.

1. **Attain personal care worker services**

During the reporting period, 24 members sought personal care worker services, and 12 of these members secured, maintained, or increased their personal care assistant services. This is below target because many members need to first secure disability benefits such as IHSS and Medicare which allow members to pay for the services. As such, DCRC restructured the program during the reporting period, hiring a Disability Benefits & Personal Assistant Coordinator in early October to address this need. Another barrier is identifying qualified care workers. DCRC partners with the California Department on Aging CalGrows Program to recruit and train effective care workers and match them with members requesting services. Offering these services to Santa Monica members will increase community living.

 **4. Increase and/or maintain income**

Outcome was above 10% of the target at year-end. Due to increased cost of living, more members identified needing income related supports, and staff supported these members with income development services

**5. Maintain Housing Stability**

DCRC far exceed the targets for this outcome. DCRC received more housing-focused referrals from the City of Santa Monica and other Senior & Disability Task Force member agencies. Additionally, the lifting of the LA County eviction moratorium in April 2023 put many more DCRC members in positions of housing instability. DCRC successfully supported these members in maintaining or increasing their housing stability.

**SECTION VIII: PROPERTY MANAGEMENT**

*If this program has entered into a lease agreement with the City of Santa Monica, please provide a status report of facility improvements and routine maintenance performed during the reporting period.*

DCRC entered into a verbal agreement with WISE & Healthy Aging to occupy an office on the second floor of the Ken Edwards Center for 8 hours on Wednesdays and Fridays from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. free of charge. Services are additionally provided virtually, telephonically or online as needed.

**By submitting this report to the Housing and Human Services Division, I certify that this report is true, complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge and that all disbursements have been made in compliance with the conditions of the Grantee Agreement and for the purposes indicated.**